



8 March 2018

(18-1430)

Page: 1/2

**Ministerial Conference
Eleventh Session
Buenos Aires, 10-13 December 2017**

Original: English

**STATEMENT BY HON. LAUTAFI FIO SELAFI PURCELL
MINISTER OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND LABOUR**

SAMOA

Revision

On behalf of the Government of Samoa and the Pacific Group, I thank the Government and people of Argentina for the generous hospitality extended to our delegations since our arrival and for hosting this ministerial meeting. At the outset, Samoa aligns itself to the statements by the Pacific Group; the ACP Ministerial Declaration; and the work of the Group of Small and Vulnerable Economies. I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Pacific Group with a detailed statement being circulated for reference.

The Pacific Forum Leaders at their meeting in Apia this past September endorsed the *Blue Pacific* narrative which emphasizes the importance of being able to have a strong and collective voice, and a regional position and actions, on issues vital to our development as a region and as the new Blue Pacific continent. This new narrative is in recognition by the Leaders of their shared ocean identity, geography and resources which is what defines Pacific peoples and is the source of transformative potential. *Securing the wellbeing and potential of The Blue Pacific is at the centre of the Forum Agenda.*

The current Forum Agenda encourages members to engage more closely and strategically, to advocate foreign policy priorities affecting 'The Blue Pacific' in order to influence actors, partners and agreements in a way that supports the Agenda. Furthermore the Forum strives for open and genuine relations, and inclusive and enduring partnerships within our region and beyond.

The Forum Agenda also aims to secure the health and wellbeing of all our peoples, particularly the most vulnerable among us. This will require enhancing the resilience of our oceans, our islands, and our economies through well-coordinated efforts in disaster and climate change risk reduction, as well as ensuring greater access to financing for resilience, climate adaptation and disaster responsive facilities.

Enabling greater Blue Pacific connectivity will promote trade both within our region and globally and will allow greater mobility of our people to access employment around the region.

The Blue Pacific requires a collective security architecture that recognizes, promotes and provides security in the broadest sense of the term. There is collective commitment to ensure the security of our shared ocean geography, resources and ecosystems therein from unsustainable exploitation and illegal activities, including illegal fishing and transnational crime. It also seeks to protect our ocean environment and our people from the scourges of nuclear weapons and pollution, from violent conflict and human rights abuses, and from impacts of climate change and disasters.

A key consideration of Development is that, economies of all small island states have peculiar circumstances associated with their vulnerabilities. The Pacific Group reaffirms that Special and Differential Treatment in recognition of this special case of SIDS must be accorded them. As Chair of the Pacific Forum, Samoa calls on the WTO, to support our efforts. We cannot continue to promote trade as a developmental tool if the rules of the multilateral trading system do not

recognise our perpetual vulnerability. The Pacific group reaffirms the centrality and indispensable function of the multilateral system and commits to playing its part in advancing remaining issues of common concern.

We continue to emphasize the importance of Fisheries to our wellbeing, livelihoods, food security, resilience and the sustainable development of our economies. The Pacific Group accords great importance to the fisheries subsidies negotiations and is encouraged by positive signals received regarding this incremental process. We note that while progress has been made in some areas, divergence remains on key issues of concern to the Pacific Group.

We look to the WTO as the forum to attain the Sustainable Development Goal 14.6 target, to eliminate and prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies by 2020. We remain hopeful for a meaningful outcome at this Ministerial Conference and will give direction on the work necessary to ensure such harmful fisheries subsidies are brought under WTO disciplines, while providing appropriate flexibilities to support our small fisheries industries.

Specifically, we call on all our members and partners, to support our insistence for appropriate transition periods, technical and capacity building assistance for implementation; and required policy space to develop our fisheries sector.

This is in line with the Pacific Forum Leaders' call for a united regional effort to establish and secure international recognition of the permanent protection and integrity of the maritime zones and sovereignty from the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise.

It is not often that you hear Samoa speak in Geneva. Madam Chair and Director General, I urge that the WTO continue to facilitate the participation of Samoa and others of the Pacific Group, and other members without permanent representation in Geneva, in the WTO processes until such a time when we are able to adequately be represented and participate fully in the negotiations.

Samoa's first WTO Trade Policy Review will take place in early 2019. I call on the members and the Secretariat to provide support for Samoa to undertake this invaluable exercise.
